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Affirmation

BY:

NATIONAL AFFIRMATION FALL GATHERING IN AUSTIN, TEXAS
October 8-10, 1993

The Austin Chapter of Affirmation and Trinity United Methodist Church, a Reconciling Congregation, will host the National Affirmation Fall Gathering, October 8-10, 1993. Our theme is:

We Shall Overcome

SURMOUNTING THE ATTACK FROM THE RIGHT

We'll Walk Hand in Hand

"The future for the pro-family movement lies not in quadrennial millennialistic runs at the White House. It lies in building an infrastructure and a farm team."--

Ralph Reed, Executive Director, Pat Robertson's Christian Coalition
National Public Radio, November 6, 1992

Reed likened the strategy of his group to guerilla warfare. He speaks of waging "stealth" activity "under the cover of night," where "every moment you disguise your position and your truth from the enemy because the minute you stick your head up, you can be shot" (CHRISTIAN CENTURY, August 8-11, 1993).

Jay Grimstead, director of the National Coordinating Council in California, boasted of winning a majority of seats on the GOP Central Committee in one California county, but declined to say which one: "The county and the liberals and the media won't know it until they take their seats and prove themselves to be what you would call Christian-right people" (NEW YORK TIMES, October 27, 1992).

We gathered in the spring in D.C. to demonstrate our belief that if even one of us is oppressed, we are all oppressed. Our rights are under seige from the "Repressive Right" which has a clear religious and political agenda.

Use the enclosed registration form to join us as we explore theological and practical responses, and even pro-active strategies, to combat the attack from the "Repressive Right."

PROGRAM LEADERS:

Rev. Steina Pope, Assistant for Pastoral Care at St. Bartholemew's Episcopal Church in Atlanta, and Chaplain for Integrity/Atlanta for 11 years. She is the daughter of two United Methodist ministers. She reported on sexuality to the National Convention of the Episcopal Church and has been published in OPEN HANDS. Pope is a lesbian who lives with her partner and two children.

Dr. Victor Paul Furnish, University Distinguished Professor of New Testament, Perkins School of Theology, was a member of the quadrennial Committee on the Study of Homosexuality of the United Methodist Church, and participated in the presentation of the committee report to General Conference in 1992. He has written extensively on homosexuality and the church.

Dr. George Ricker, retired United Methodist Pastor, and former Minister of Practical Theology and Ethical Concerns at Campus Christian Community, Southwest Texas University. A long-time, outspoken advocate for human rights and the freedom and acceptance inherent in the Gospel, he most recently served as moderator of the January, 1993, forum "The Impact of the Religious Right on American Culture."

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HOUSING:

We have a block of rooms at Rodeway Inn/Airport -- 5526 North IH 35, 1-800-880-0709 or 512-451-7001, \$36+tax/night -- Single, Double, Triple or Quad. What a deal! Pick your roommate(s) now and make your reservations. There are a limited number of King rooms available and all others have two double beds. CALL THE HOTEL DIRECTLY TO MAKE YOUR RESERVATION--BE SURE TO ASK FOR "AFFIRMATION" GROUP RATE.

There are 30 spaces in private homes, and a form enclosed to secure one of those spaces and/or tell us your travel plans/needs.

TRANSPORTATION:

Call 1-800-950-8283, Century Travel in Austin for best possible rates and connections to Austin, from wherever you are. They will take your credit card number and mail tickets to you. The hotel provides an airport shuttle. Austin Affirmation will provide airport pick-up if you are not going to the hotel prior to the meeting, or if you are staying in a private home.

WHERE AND WHEN:

We are meeting at St. George's Episcopal Church, 4301 N. IH 35, and it is only a \$5 cab ride from the airport. Plan to be there by 6:30 PM on Friday, October 8, and leave after 1:00 PM on Sunday, October 11.

WE HOPE TO SEE YOU ALL IN AUSTIN!!!

HOMOSEXUALITY CALLED MOST DIVISIVE ISSUE FOR CHURCHES

MILWAUKEE, Wis. (UMNS)--Homosexuality is the "deepest issue dividing churches today," according to the top executive of United Methodism's Commission on Christian Unity and Interreligious Concerns.

The Rev. Bruce Robbins of New York made the statement at a luncheon gathering of 50 United Methodists attending the annual National Workshop on Christian Unity here May 10-13.

Robbins cited as evidence the narrow vote last year by the National Council of

Churches' general board to take no action on an application for NCC observer status submitted by a denomination whose members are mostly gay men and lesbians.

The NCC board, representing the council's 32 member denominations, made its decision about the Universal Fellowship of Metropolitan Community Churches (UFMCC) by a 90-81 vote.

"Observer status" in the council, Robbins said, is a "minimalist" form of participation granted to organizations ineligible for full membership, including the National Islamic Society and the American Jewish Congress.

Approving UFMCC observer status would have cost the council several member churches, Robbins said, adding that United Methodist delegates, who were "nearly unanimous" in favoring the observer status bid, issued a formal dissent along with two other denominations.

Robbins cited two other examples of the "church-dividing" nature of the homosexuality issue.

The "covenanting" proposals for forging closer ties among the nine denominations involved in the Consultation on Church Union are in jeopardy in the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), which will vote on "covenanting" at its upcoming General Assembly.

Recent Presbyterian debate has been thrown into turmoil by critics who point out that the covenanting proposals would mean fully recognizing and accepting the ministries of the United Church of Christ (UCC), some of whose congregations accept openly gay and lesbian clergy.

Robbins also noted that a cooperating cluster of churches in a Midwestern city was recently thrown into crisis when a UCC congregation in the group called an openly gay man as pastor. A United Methodist local church reacted by breaking off fellowship, stating that it could no longer worship with the cluster because of the gay minister's sacramental role.

Mark Bowman of Chicago, coordinator of the Reconciling Congregation Program, told participants that a common misconception is "that reconciling congregations must have solely gay and lesbian members."

In fact, he added, "some are not aware that they have any gay and lesbian members." Some have lost members as a result of their decision to become reconciling congregations, but others have gained, Bowman said.

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He said the program reframes the question: "For 20 years... the church has asked, 'What should the church say about homosexuality?' Instead, we ask 'What does it mean to be in ministry? What does it mean to exclude people from our ministry? ... Can we be exclusive and still be the body of Christ?'"

Four of the denomination's annual conferences have voted to become "reconciling conferences," and the Christian unity commission calls itself a "reconciling commission," the only churchwide agency to take such a stand.

Host Bishop Sharon Z. Rader, Sun Prairie, Wis., welcomed the group, saying that regarding ecumenical developments, "our cup is half full, not half empty- and may it go on to overflowing."

The annual four-day Christian unity workshop drew more than 400 Roman Catholic, Protestant and Orthodox Christians. The event included joint worship services, workshops and seminars, Bible study, speeches and discussion groups.

Next year's workshop is set for Providence, R.I.

HOMOSEXUALITY IS GOD'S GIFT

The following is reprinted, with permission, from the Providence (RI) Journal-Bulletin issue of June 1, 1993:

Homosexuality is God's Gift

Norman MacLeod

Is homosexuality a gift from God, and therefore to be affirmed by the church? Faithful Christians have begun to ask one another that question, and increasingly they are answering in the affirmative.

One consequence of this positive answer is the realization that gay men and lesbians have through the centuries suffered a terrible injustice. They have been a people in bondage, in their own spiritual, emotional and political slavery in Egypt.

I believe that today, Christians are called by God to redress this wrong. They are called to affirm the value of homosexual persons within the church and to work for their legal rights in society.

As an Episcopal priest, a college chaplain and a married heterosexual man with three children, I have grappled with

the issues relating to homosexuality, through study and through dialogue with gays and lesbians. I have become increasingly convinced that the men and women I have listened to do not make a choice about their sense of sexual identity. They respond to what has been given them. They feel deeply that their sexual orientation goes to the very core of who they are. The stories they tell me are clear and consistent, and, for myself, I believe they speak the truth. Increasingly, biological and psychological research appears to support these feelings and perceptions.

For my part, however, the jury is in. The evidence speaks strongly enough to me that I believe that the church and all faithful people must work not only to encourage tolerance of homosexuals, but must take a further step. Christians should affirm that homosexuality is not a curse, but a blessing to all of us, one of God's particular gifts in the created order. We must begin to see that except in relation to their sexual orientation, homosexuals differ not at all from heterosexuals. Their sins are no greater, and no less, than those of the rest of us.

Because of their sexuality, however, they bring gifts to the world that heterosexuals do not bring. They view the world through a different set of sexual lenses, contributing to the world a set of valuable perspectives. These perspectives can and do lead many to worship God and serve others in unique and life-giving ways. The world would be poorer without these contributions.

Some of these gifts are fairly obvious. We live in difficult times that show no signs of becoming easier. Both in the church and in society, we need the perspective of people whose sense of love flows in a different direction. This frame of reference leads to different priorities, different life decisions, and in some measure to a different vision of how we can live together in community. Men whose first love is for men and women whose first love is for women can tell all of us something about how to minister to men and to women, pastorally and spiritually.

There are other gifts that are more subtle. Many homosexual persons have undergone a great deal of suffering because of the prejudice, discrimination, hatred and

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violence directed at them. Perhaps for this very reason, I have observed in many gay and lesbian people a keen sense of social justice and a finely tuned moral compass based on their own experience of oppression. We need to hear these voices and learn from them.

The affirmation of the Godgiven nature of homosexuality is by no means an affirmation of irresponsible, promiscuous sexual behavior. I believe God blessed the world with heterosexual people and homosexual people, and that neither should be irresponsible or promiscuous. I believe a committed monogamous relationship is the healthiest and most blessed setting for sexual relationships, gay and straight.

I also believe, however, that the incidence of promiscuous, destructive lifestyles among homosexual persons would be greatly reduced by a wide acceptance that homosexuality is one of nature's ways, and God's ways, for people to interact in love. If one of my children were gay or lesbian, I would hope that church and society would find ways to affirm their self-worth as children of God and help them find healthy, stable and creative ways to live in the world.

In the end, this is an issue of justice. Homosexuals are on a long list of peoples who have been dehumanized by stronger forces in the world around them. Many of the barriers that have prevented women, Jews, African-Americans and other groups of "different" peoples from fully participating in society have fallen. Many still remain, but the barrier against full, open and honest participation in community life by gays and lesbians must also fall. They deserve to be full citizens and to be free of shame about who they are. Such support would go a long way toward easing the pressures on gays and lesbians who are drawn to less healthy relationships out of shame or fear of discovery.

For many Christians, the verses of the Bible that deal with homosexuality cast a cloud over the issue. As a student of Scripture, I believe, with many scholars far more erudite than I, that the biblical injunctions against homosexuality must be understood in the same framework that we now understand the injunctions against menstruating women and people suffering from leprosy. These passages reflect more the limited understanding of an

ancient culture than they do the word of God.

One witness of the life of Jesus was to welcome the outcast into his midst: the woman, the leper, the "other." It is the voice of Christ calling out to the despised and the oppressed that we must listen to when we debate the place of homosexuality in modern society. In our nation, we have the opportunity to undo an injustice of biblical proportions by affirming the dignity and rights of homosexual people.

We can let a people go.

The Rev. Norman MacLeod is vicar of St. Augustine's (Episcopal) Church in Kingston and is the Episcopal chaplain of the University of Rhode Island.

RECONCILING CONGREGATIONS THANKED FOR PROVIDING 'WELCOMING' SPACE

WASHINGTON (UMNS)--United Methodist congregations that declare their openness to all persons, regardless of sexual orientation, were praised here by United Methodist Bishop Susan M. Morrison, Valley Forge, Pa., during a July 8-11 convocation of reconciling congregations.

She thanked representatives of the program for providing "welcoming space" for persons who are often rejected by church and society.

Such congregations, she added, are "zones of safety, vessels of grace and stories of love."

Morrison said reconciling congregations provide an arena where people can deal with sexuality in a holistic way. Problems such as homophobia (fear of homosexuality) and clergy misconduct may stem from the church's immaturity in dealing with sexuality, she asserted.

The church's negative attitude on homosexuality has contributed to the growing number of teen-age suicides, lack of treatment for people with AIDS and increasingly violent gay-bashing in society, Morrison said.

Reconciling congregations can create safe spaces and counter those who spew hate, she asserted. The gospel of love, with a mission of infecting others with hope, can be a liberating experience, she said.

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Other speakers addressed the convocation theme, "Borne on the Breath of God: Remembering, Renewing, Reforming and Returning."

The next national convocation for reconciling congregation representatives is scheduled for 1996.



G A Y

They tell us we are wrong.
We are wrong to be in love.
That it is forbidden
In the eyes of God above.

They tell us we are queer,
And that we should be ashamed
Try to make us live in fear.
"Dyke" and "Queer" is what we're named.

They don't know we endure
And that victory is our aim.
In this we are secure
And will have none of their shame.

They don't know we are strong
And our life is built on joy.
We know we are right--not wrong.
And our love will not destroy.

Pamilla Sue Hopkins

1993/1994 NEWSLETTER DEADLINES

Winter Publication: Nov. 15
Deadline: Oct. 22

Spring Publication: Feb. 25
Deadline: Feb. 1

Summer Publication: May 18
Deadline: April 25

Fall Publication: Aug. 10
Deadline: July 15

All submissions should be sent to:
National Affirmation
P.O. Box 1021
Evanston, IL 60204

WITNESS COMMITTEE REPORT

1. General Conference Location and Witness

The Commission on the General Conference listened to arguments that it ought to move the 1996 General Conference away from Denver, Colorado on June 5, 1993. Among those making presentations were Affirmation Spokesperson Gloria Soliz, MFSA Executive Director George McClain, Open Hands editor Mary Jo Osterman and Toni Cook, pastor of St. Paul's UMC in Denver and co-founder with Greg Norton of United Methodists Against Discrimination. Although the Commission decided not to move the General Conference, it did vote to make the "strongest possible witness" against civil rights discrimination, consult with church groups appearing before them in the design of that witness, so that, for the first time, lesbians, gay men and bisexual persons are to be consulted officially on matters having to do with homosexuality. (What a concept!?) The Witness Committee will be following up on this matter. Thank you, Gloria, Mary Jo, George, Toni, Greg and over 3000 persons who petitioned the Commission.

2. Oregon-Idaho Conference Happenings

June and July saw many exciting developments in the Oregon-Idaho Conference. Annual Conference The Affirmation Fellowship organized for a major presence. They held a dinner right before conference began, staffed a hospitality center during conference meeting times and prepared a poignant poster and booklet for display in the conference center at Willamette University. As conference proceeded, more and more people could be seen wearing buttons with pink triangles and supportive phrases.

The Clergy Session continued Jeanne Knepper as a probationer on Leave of Absence status. As the body worked through that decision, it sent two requests for declaratory judgment to the Judicial Council. A member of the body also asked for episcopal rulings on two points. As this goes to press, those petitions are scheduled for the October 27-29, 1993, meeting of the Judicial Council. As clergy met in a specially scheduled third session to consider the issues presented by Knepper's case, lay

NATIONAL AFFIRMATION
1993 FALL GATHERING

OCTOBER 8-10, 1993 - Austin, Texas

REGISTRATION FORM

To register, complete the information below and mail with your check payable to "National Affirmation" to:

ELLIE CHARLTON
Affirmation Treasurer
San Francisco, CA

DEADLINE

MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 20, 1993

Name _____ Phone (____) _____

Address _____

City/State/ZIP _____

* * * * *

REGISTRATION FEE

\$ _____

INCOME

FEE

Students/Subsistence.....	\$ 25.00
Under \$20,000/year.....	45.00
\$20,000 - \$30,000/year.....	65.00
\$30,000 - \$40,000/year.....	90.00
Over \$40,000/year.....	100.00

I am enclosing additional dollars to
enable another person to attend.

\$ _____

FOR OFFICE USE ONLY

Date Received: _____ Check #: _____ Amount: _____ Date Confirmed: _____

NATIONAL AFFIRMATION

1993 FALL GATHERING

OCTOBER 8-10, 1993 - Austin, Texas

HOUSING FORM

There are 30 spaces in private homes in Austin which will be filled on a first come/first served basis.

DEADLINE: MONDAY - SEPTEMBER 20, 1993

To reserve space in a private home, complete the information below and mail to:

Don Lovering

Austin, Texas

Name _____ Phone (____) _____

Address _____

City/State/ZIP _____

Non-Smoking? _____ Vegetarian? _____ Mobility Impaired? _____ (please explain) _____

Roommate Preference _____

Arrival Date & Time _____ Departure Date & Time _____

Making my own housing arrangements _____

TRANSPORTATION FORM

** PLEASE NOTE: The Rodeway Inn/Airport has an airport shuttle. Please use this form ONLY if you will not be going to the hotel prior to the meeting--or --are staying in a private home. St. George's Episcopal church is a \$5 cab ride from the airport.

I need transportation/pick-up to/from the airport _____

Arrival Date & Time _____ Departure Date & Time _____

Airline & Flight Number _____

FOR OFFICE USE ONLY

Date Received: _____ Date Confirmed: _____ Assigned To: _____

members of the Affirmation Fellowship and Metanoia Peace Community UMC kept a rainbow-armbanded prayer and witness vigil outside the doors.

The Annual Conference adopted three motions about homosexuality. One recommended that local churches study the concept that "Any person who would otherwise be accepted as a candidate, ordained as a minister or appointed to serve in The United Methodist Church shall not be rejected simply because he or she is a self-avowed practicing homosexual." The second recorded opposition to the efforts of the Oregon Citizens' Alliance and Idaho Citizens' Alliance to place measures limiting the rights of homosexuals on the ballot and encouraging United Methodists to oppose those measures and work for civil rights. The third sent a letter to President Clinton supporting the removal of all policies which would bar acknowledged gay men and lesbians from military service.

Shalom Ministries After annual conference Alice Knotts and Jeanne Knepper set to work organizing Shalom Ministries, a United Methodist outreach ministry of education, empowerment and advocacy for justice to and with gay men and lesbians, church congregations, people estranged from religion and any others who seek an inclusive church in a just society. Shalom Ministries operates under the organizational umbrella of Portland Urban Ministry Association (PUMA), a conference-backed organization. The ministry is beginning with support groups, study and spiritual growth groups. We will be available to assist local churches to conduct their own programs of outreach or education, and will coordinate a speakers' bureau to address church, school or community audiences. We are starting off with money for six weeks and lots of energy. University Park UMC, a Reconciling Congregation, gave us free space for the summer.

Metanoia: Partners in Reconciliation

Metanoia Peace Community UMC is a Reconciling Congregation determined to address and heal the hurts of homophobia.

Both Metanoia: Partners in Reconciliation and Shalom Ministries will be conducting on-going fundraising programs. Contact them at Shalom Ministries, P.O. Box 66147, Portland, OR 97266 and Metanoia Peace Community, 2116 N.E. 18th

Avenue, Portland, OR 97212.

Reconciling Congregations

There are now four Reconciling Congregations in Oregon. These churches represent vital United Methodist energy directed toward an inclusive church that values diversity.

3. Judicial Council Petitions on Covenant Services and Ordination Issues

The Judicial Council has received six petitions asking for decisions on issues of particular interest to Affirmation. The Minnesota Conference sent a petition drafted by Jeanne Audrey Powers that asks for a declaratory decision on whether it was in order for Bishop Sharon Brown Christopher to rule out of order a resolution entitled "Celebration of Relationships of Couples of the Same Gender by Minnesota's Reconciling Churches."

The Troy Conference asked for a declaratory decision to determine if the Discipline is violated by a conference resolution recognizing covenant services which celebrate persons' mutual support, commitment and love outside the civil and religious rite of marriage.

Four petitions came to the Judicial Council from Oregon-Idaho Conference. They all address the case of Jeanne Knepper. Two are episcopal rulings, which will be reviewed and sustained, modified or overturned. Those rulings apply only to this specific case. The other two ask for declaratory judgments on the interpretation and priority of apparently contradictory Disciplinary passages. Declaratory rulings apply throughout the denomination.

Any "interested party" can file a brief on any petition before the Judicial Council. To do so, you send ten copies of the brief at least 45 days before the Judicial Council meets. The next meeting is in Atlanta, Ga., October 27-29, 1993. Briefs for items to be considered at that meeting must be received by September 11.

I'm asking anyone with experience in church law to contact me about working together on a brief: Jeanne Knepper, [REDACTED] Portland, OR [REDACTED].

4. Caucus of Caucuses

The loosely organized Caucus of Caucuses began meeting at the 1992 General Conference. People representing the

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interests of a number of liberal caucuses met every afternoon to share information and plans about issues of concern to them. Since General Conference, we have met twice, in October '92 and July '93. At the most recent meeting, we agreed to continue working together in a pro-active way as we prepare for the 1996 General Conference. We will meet next in March, 1994.

5. Conclusion

This is a time of ferment and progress. Other annual conferences have also dealt with issues of homosexuality, homophobia and heterosexism. I would like to encourage those of you who know about other actions to write a report for the newsletter. It's important that we all know how much is going on.

I'd like to end this report on a personal note. Alice and I had no assurances of work when we loaded everything we had into a rented truck and went to annual conference this year. We didn't know whether the clergy would adopt the Board of Ordained Ministry's strongly worded motion of support for my continuation as a probationer, nor could we determine how Bishop Dew would respond to the request for an episcopal decision. We didn't know whether Alice would be appointed, though she is in good standing. We have been sustained by prayers, letters and good wishes from many of you. Now we're starting really exciting work and preparing briefs for the Judicial Council hearings. We believe that there is a need for this ministry. For now, it's a faith walk: scary, exciting, humbling and spiritually fulfilling. Please continue to keep us in your thoughts and prayers. Shalom.

Jeanne Knepper
Convenor, Witness Committee

CAUGHT IN THE MIDDLE

This poem was used as part of the Saturday morning devotional time for the Spring Gathering focused on Sexualities: Images and Realities.

Caught in the Middle

Caught in the middle
Wanting to escape
Straights bitching about gays
Gays sneering at straights
"You know what you really are,"
they tell me from both sides.
Their arrogance of thinking they know me
better than I know myself.

Sex. Gender. Sexual orientation.
Maybe in my former lives
maybe I've been both men and women
Maybe that's why gender seems so
transparent
I've already loved men and women,
women and men.
Maybe men and men, women and women.
Monogamy is so limiting, so visionless.
Why should I let them tell me that
I can love only one,
only one at a time, only one in bed
at a time?

What about the cloud that turns
peach, illuminated with gold,
then fuchsia, as I drive toward the
west and become breathless
momentarily?
How can I be monogamous with her?
Loving is what is important to me,
not who, what, not which gender,
not whether they deserve or want
to be loved.
I just need to love.

Peggy R. Gaylord

Are you Lesbian and Christian?

A committee has recently formed consisting of Lesbian Christians from across the United States to plan for a

NATIONAL CONGRESS FOR LESBIAN CHRISTIANS

To be held in 1995 on the West Coast

We want to hear about your interest in planning, participating and attending such an event in 1995. FOR INFORMATION WRITE:

The National Congress for Lesbian Christians Planning Committee

P.O. Box 814, Capitola, CA 95010

or call 1-800-861-6252 between 6:30 pm--9:30 pm PST

THE BIPHOBIA SCALE

Recently in correspondence with Loraine Hutchins, co-author of Bi Any Other Name: Bisexual People Speak Out, I received a copy of "The Biphobia Scale" that was adapted from the Riddle Homophobia scale of Dr. Dorothy Riddle by Stuart Hayes, M.Ed., Ohio, with some additions by Loraine and her coeditor Lani Kaahumanu. Where do you fit on the scale? Where would you like to fit?

Peggy Gaylord

BIPHOBIC (negative) attitude levels:

1. **Repulsion:** Bisexuality is seen as non-existent or something disgusting or unnatural. Bisexual women and men have a mental disorder, are immoral, are sex-crazed, spread sexually transmitted diseases to heterosexuals (and lesbians), and most of all, they are deeply confused. Anything is OK to change them: violence, isolation, cultural condemnation, and/or psychotherapy.

2. **Pity:** Heterosexuality is more mature, and in some circles being lesbian or gay is more mature, than to be bisexual. Any possibility of becoming one or the other (het or homo) should be reinforced, and anyone who's born bi should be pitied, the "poor things."

3. **Tolerance:** Bisexuality is just a phase, an adolescent developmental task, and many people go through it and grow out of it. So, bis are more immature than others (plug in het or gay, or both, here, depending upon your identity), and should be protected and indulged--treated like children. Since they are still in an adolescent phase and can't make up their minds, they don't deserve positions of authority or responsibility. (Also, they have no "politics.")

4. **Acceptance:** This implies that there is something to accept about bisexuals. It is demonstrated in attitudes such as, "You're not a bisexual to me, you're a person," or "Whom you sleep with is your business," or "Your bisexuality is OK by me as long as you don't flaunt it or try converting me."

BIFRIENDLY (positive) attitude levels:

5. **Support:** Working to champion rights of bi women and men alongside lesbians and gays to overcome heterosexism. Persons

here may be uncomfortable personally with bisexuality, but they acknowledge the biphobic, homophobic, and heterosexist climate's inherent injustices.

6. **Admiration:** Acknowledges the courage and strength needed to be bisexual in our society. People at this level are willing to look at their own biphobic attitudes, values, and behaviors.

7. **Appreciation:** This level indicates a valuing of differences in people and cultures and recognizes bisexual women and men as an integral part of sexual and cultural diversity.

8. **Nurturance:** Views bisexual women and men as crucial persons in our society with much to offer in developing a "both/and" way of appreciating cultural differences in an "either/or" society. Persons at this level celebrate bisexual women and men with genuine affection and are willing advocates and allies for them in overcoming biphobia, homophobia, and heterosexism.

THE MARCH ON WASHINGTON

For all of you who for various reasons were unable to attend the March On Washington (MOW), you really missed a once in a lifetime event. This march had NO comparison! Never before have so many lesbian, gay, bisexual and straight people converged to one place with one goal.

The actual March was Sunday April 25th. It was a mostly sunny and warm (not hot--at least the temperature wasn't) day. We took the Metro from Christ Church to the Smithsonian station on the Mall and walked past the Quilt display over to the Washington Monument. Coming over the hill you got a breathtaking view of the assembly area with the various groups holding up their banners and the multitudes of very colorful tee shirts, etc. As far as you could see people having a good time, celebrating, enjoying life and willing to be visible for all of those who couldn't be.

Affirmation was in the "Religious Organizations" group, about one third of the way into the March. We ended up after MCC, UCC, and Wesley Seminary. We also had several Reconciling Congregations marching with us. The "Religious Organizations" was one of the larger contingents. The March started at 12 noon--we didn't move until about 2:30 and

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finished about 5:30. As we passed the "Religious Right" protest group we sang "Jesus loves me this we know for the Bible tells YOU so..." Our slight revision of the lyrics took them by surprise--how often do they have their "own" material used against them!

After the March ended and the "end of National Gathering" goodbyes were exchanged, a couple of us climbed the steps of the Capitol. From there you could look out across the Final Stage and as far as you could see there were people enjoying the freedom and the joy of the weekend. In the history of the country there has never been a larger, more joyous, more peaceful, and, of course, more colorful civil rights demonstration. And Affirmation was part of it!!!

Paul Thompson

POSTHUMOUS AWARD OF MERIT TO REV. RICHARD MONROE

The Oklahoma Gay and Lesbian Political Caucus presented an Award of Merit, posthumously, to the Rev. Richard Monroe "for his advocacy for AIDS awareness in the United Methodist Church and his work as Executive Director of the AIDS Support Program." The award was presented at the annual "Phobie Awards" and Awards of Merit Banquet held on Sunday, May 16, 1993.

Richard was one of the early founders of National Affirmation and was instrumental in beginning the Oklahoma City Affirmation group.



EDITOR'S NOTE: We appologise for the long delay in getting this issue of the Newsletter in the mail. Several factors contributed to this: 1) Some vital material was unavoidably late in reaching this office, 2) The weekend the final story arrived, we were called out of town on a family emergency, and 3) for the last ten days the editor has been violently ill with food poisoning. We realize that this delay has affected many of the timely items in this issue, and we are sorry for this.

Affirmation



United Methodist for Lesbian, Gay, and Bisexual Concerns

Affirmation seeks to:

- coordinate advocacy with supportive United Methodist groups;
- respond to opportunities for ecumenical and interfaith witness and action;
- sponsor education and information services;
- inform members of activities in the church that may be of interest and offer suggestions as to possible responses.

Who We Are ...

Affirmation is a churchwide, inclusive community of lesbians, gay men, bisexuals, and heterosexuals who affirm full participation of all persons, regardless of affectional/sexual orientation, in the United Methodist Church. We serve both as a network for justice-seeking ministries and as a personal support network for lesbian, gay, and bisexual United Methodists. Both laypersons and clergy are active, valued members of our family.

All persons interested in being part of Affirmation and its programs are welcome to participate in our National Gatherings. These Gatherings provide an opportunity for personal and spiritual growth, fellowship, support, and a way to make a difference in the church.

All are welcome as part of the Affirmation family regardless of religious affiliation. We welcome your participation and membership in our national organization and local groups. Participation could range from attendance at events to service on committees and working groups. A wide variety of social activities, programs, and committees, and fabulous opportunities - all requiring creativity, ideas, work, and financial support - are available for your consideration at our national, regional, and local levels.

I am interested in knowing more about:

- ☐ Becoming a member of national Affirmation and receive the quarterly newsletter.
- ☐ Upcoming national Affirmation Gatherings
- ☐ Affirmation groups or events in my region or city.
- ☐ Starting a local group.
- ☐ I want to provide financial support for the work of Affirmation.

I enclosed a donation of \$ _____

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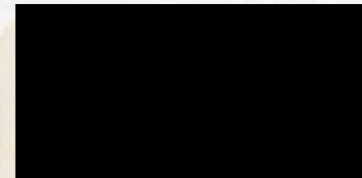
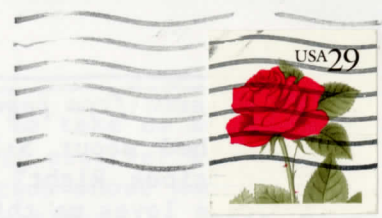
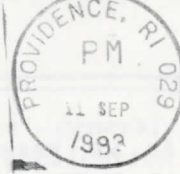
Phone _____ Annual Conference _____

All Affirmation correspondence is mailed discreetly.
All contributions to national Affirmation are tax deductible.

Write to:

Affirmation
United Methodist for Lesbian, Gay, and
Bisexual Concerns
P.O. Box 1021
Evanston, Illinois 60204

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Evanston, IL 60204



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